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FM AMEMBASSY BANJUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6613
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DEPT PASS PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR, AFRICA REGION -- HENRY
MCKOY; DAKAR PASS RAO, DAO, AND ODC

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [PREF](#) [CASC](#) [SG](#) [GA](#)
SUBJECT: THE GAMBIA: MORE ON REPORTED FIGHTING NEAR GAMBIAN
BORDER WITH CASAMANCE

REF: A. BANJUL 253
[1](#)B. BANJUL 250

INTERIOR MINISTER'S UPDATE

[1](#)1. (SBU) In April 26 conversation, Ambassador asked Interior Minister Baboucar Jatta about situation along The Gambia's border with Senegal's Casamance region, following recent reports of fighting -- most recently during night of April 24-25 -- in that area, involving forces of dissident MFDC commander Salif Sadio (refs a and b). Jatta said that, judging from reports by Gambian authorities in the border area, the area was presently calm and that, in any event, none of the recent violence had spilled over into Gambian territory. He attributed the violence to clashes between "moderate" MFDC elements and Sadio's forces. Jatta said the GOTG was coordinating with the Red Cross on assistance to refugees entering The Gambia as a result of the recent incidents, but he could give no estimate of number of refugees.

SAFETY OF PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS

[1](#)2. (SBU) In discussion with Interior Minister Jatta, Ambassador flagged our concern for the safety of the three Peace Corps Volunteers (PCV) serving in Gambian villages near the Casamance border area where the latest clashes occurred. At Ambassador's request, Jatta said GOTG would advise us of any reports of violence spilling over into The Gambia. (NOTE: We have checked on the status of the three PCV's and all are safe. Mission security personnel will travel to PCV's villages April 27 for site assessment. END NOTE)

NGO SOURCE

[1](#)3. (SBU) Official with Concern Universal, NGO working in Gambian villages near the Casamance border, told us April 26 of a growing refugee flow into The Gambia due to the fighting, estimating at 400 to 600 the total number arriving since April 21. Whereas the Concern Universal rep had previously indicated to us that the refugee influx was not of such magnitude as to require urgent assistance, he now acknowledged heightened concern on this score. He undertook to keep us informed of the evolving refugee situation along the Gambian/Casamance border.

TREATMENT OF WOUNDED "MODERATE" MFDC ELEMENTS

[1](#)4. (SBU) Gambian police sources informed us that, at Senegalese authorities' request, five or six "moderate" MFDC

elements wounded in the clashes with Sadio's fighters had been brought to Banjul and were currently being treated at the city's main hospital.

STAFFORD